



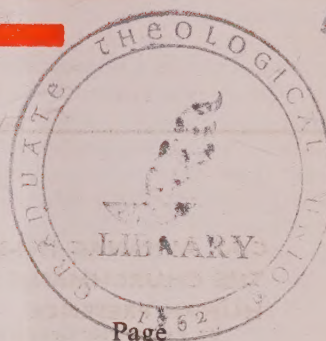
# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● JANUARY 1981

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# New Year Thoughts

The year 1980 has ended. The new year 1981 has begun. All new things attract our attention. So also the New Year. There is hardly any one who is not fascinated by something that is new. We often associate newness with the latest fashions in dress and jewellery, the latest models of cars and gadgets in the market, the latest hits in music and films, and the latest scientific discoveries and technological innovations. But it is common knowledge that the so-called new fashions, new models and new styles have but a brief sway over us because they are susceptible to change and decay, and lose their fascination as soon as something else emerges as new and fashionable rendering the former things old and outmoded and as such stale and staid.

In contrast to these things which are new today and grow old tomorrow or day after, the Bible speaks of new things of a different nature and quality. In fact 'the new' is one of the dominant themes in the Bible. The pages of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament are replete with references to 'a new heart', 'a new covenant', 'a new city', 'a new Jerusalem', 'a new commandment', 'a new man', 'a new Adam', 'a new birth', 'a new heaven and a new earth', and many more. There is also the promise in the Book of Revelation: 'Behold, I make all things new'. These are different from the new things whose newness fades away sooner than later because their newness is the product of God's eternal ceaseless creative and redemptive activity in and among men, and hence it is eternal and enduring. They remain always new because they are subject to the transforming and renewing power of the Living God, Immanuel, who is with us and working among us. In the context of our Christian faith, we have to understand newness as a process through which God renews our hearts and minds and reforms and restructures our human social order when it becomes corrupt and inhuman.

Thus newness according to our Christian faith is primarily concerned with us and our society. It is to be seen in our personal lives and social relationships. God wants us to be new men bearing the stamp of his transforming and renewing power. In order to become new men and women, we must surrender ourselves to God. When we surrender ourselves to God with all our corrupt nature, He will take away the old heart hardened by sin and in its place will give us a new heart filled with love, peace and joy. He will banish from our minds all fear which drives us to seek security in false values, old traditions and outmoded social structures, and will give us courage to take the risk of a new life-style which conforms not to worldly standards but to the will of God and laws of justice, peace and righteousness.

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The world today is badly in need of men and women with a new vision committed to a new value system and a new life-style who are willing to be instruments of God to change the contemporary archaic world order which tends to sacrifice the well-being and future of man on the altar of the security of the old sovereign nation-state. The obsession of our world leaders today with the security of the sovereign nation-state is responsible for the nuclear arms race which poses a serious threat to the very survival of man. Further, the irresponsible and indiscriminate exploitation of the earth's resources also threatens the survival of the human race. These old habits and ways of thinking coupled with the old natural instinct of man to possess and consume without any care and concern for his brother's needs may soon render our Mother Earth inhabitable to mankind. In the context of such an impending human crisis, we have to think of the hopes and fears, possibilities and potentialities of the New Year.

The new year should direct us to move closer to God and be with Him in His unending work of creation and renewal. It should inspire us to initiate new relationships and forge new movements which will lead us to take the risk of making new 'humanizing adaptations' which are very much needed in order to create a new human order at the national and international levels. The essence of these new humanizing adaptations consists in the willingness of men to discard the old ethic of consumerism and cut throat competition which is rooted in the selfish nature of man. Instead, we ought to follow the divine law of mutual concern and care, co-operation and goodwill. In other words, a new human world order requires that man and his welfare and future should be the centre of all human endeavour rather than the security of the sovereign nation-state which has proved to be the source of war and destruction and denial of human rights. This in its turn demands a new and higher level of intellectual and spiritual evolution of man which will convert him from a parochial man into a global man with overarching loyalty and commitment to the human community and its survival.

Our national and social life is still very much in bondage to the old laws and customs of a caste-ridden society and communal prejudices and fears. The prevailing agony and turmoil in Assam, Hindu-Muslim riots, atrocities against Harijans and the denial of basic human rights to millions of people are nothing but symptoms of a persisting disease caused by old



prejudices and fears. The year 1981 calls for new initiatives and new moves towards communal harmony and peace. The Church as well as individual Christians should act in this crisis and carry out their ministry of reconciliation.

The New Year is an opportunity for the Church to search for new ways and means to witness to the transforming and renewing power of our Lord, by

accepting in full obedience His promise of new life and willing to give up old ways of doing things which often led in the past to bitterness and unhealthy rivalry disrupting the unity and fellowship in the church. The new year challenges the Church to undertake new initiatives and new ventures towards becoming truly Indian and self-reliant and more effective as an instrument for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

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# Mission in the Context of the struggles for Justice:

## A Tri-Country Programme for Development Education

Ten delegates from various parts of India were selected to participate in a tri-country programme for development education sponsored by the Hamburg Missions Academy and the CCPD of the World Council of Churches. Ten delegates from the Philippines and sixteen from West Germany were the other delegates that constituted this tri-country Programme.

Last year the German and the Indian delegates were exposed to the reality obtaining in the Philippines. This year the Philippines visited various parts of our country and, together with the Indian delegates, went to Germany. The Indian delegates had a unique opportunity to visit East Germany, live with the ordinary people in a village and learn their way of life particularly in term of the LPG's which is a system of agricultural production co-operatives. They realised that in East Germany one can own private property but this is given to the co-operatives for the common use. Secondly, it is possible to have savings but not enough to buy the means of production which enhances the capitalistic tendencies of the people.

Finally, all the delegates assembled at Cartigny near Geneva, to reflect together on their experience in these three countries and the following are excerpts from the Final Statement which was the result of corporate evaluation of the Tri-country experience :

### Situational Analysis

We see a situation of exploitation existing in all the three countries, where a minority controls the economy of the nation. As a result of their economic power, they control the political apparatus which is used to protect and strengthen their position, thereby determining the destiny of the vast majority of the people. Moreover, this results in the perpetuation of the capitalistic mode of production, which reduces people to parts in the process of production, thereby negating their humanity.

In response to the economic exploitation and political oppression, people in the three countries have become aware and have organized themselves on various levels.

Whereas in the Philippines, there is an organized and co-ordinated people's movement in India several local groups exist without a proper network ; similarly in Germany there exists neither a common vision nor an organized movement as yet, but we saw the beginning of the linking up of different issue-oriented actions for a common struggle.

The experience of the Indian group in the German Democratic Republic has confirmed the validity and necessity of a socialist option which clearly provides a better basis on which to establish a just society. Such a socialist society should be characterized by common ownership of the means of production, participation in decision-making, and a culture that expresses and enhances the genuine aspirations of the people.

### Our Common Vision

Seeing the basic conflicts within the system covering the three countries, with its principal neglect of human needs, we are led to assume that there is an essential contradiction between the capitalist system and the claim of the Gospel. Reading the Bible again in the light of this contradiction, we discover that God's option for the poor is a key concept. For according to the Gospel, God's concern is directed towards the wholeness of human life—so far denied to the poor—whereas the capitalist order does not care for full humanity since its concern is admittedly to make more profit. Therefore, we maintain a correspondence between the biblical promise of the Kingdom of God and human efforts to transform the present system into a just participatory, socialist society.

In the centre of this historical process, as we see in many parts of the world from the revolutionary process, are the poor, deprived, exploited and oppressed masses. In the light of this process, we rediscover what it means to our faith and commitment that God's liberating intervention in the Old Testament history, as well as God's incarnation in Christ, show overwhelming evidence of God taking the side of the poor. In this context, the Good News challenges us as Christians



get involved in the process of people liberating themselves from the powers and principalities.

We see Christians participate in this struggle for liberation in different degrees. Although we do not expect the Church itself to bring about the transformation of society, we do trust that the church, too, will be renewed as the living body of Christ, inasmuch as increasing numbers of Christians get involved in this ongoing process. So far the church as an institution has not found its place in the historical struggle of the poor, and some of us are even afraid that the church will finally be counted among the forces that maintain the *status quo*.

Seeing the suffering, we feel compelled to draw from the biblical heritage the motivation and strength necessary to commit ourselves to get involved more deeply and seriously in the struggle for justice—in spite of our religious socialization, of our middle class leanings and in spite as well of revival movements which are introduced to our societies as a religious means of lulling people rather than help them accept the oppressive situation.

As to what extent the Bible and theology can be used in conscientizing people should be answered according to the regional situation, which is quite different in the Philippines, which is a Christian country, in India with its 2.3% Christians minority, or in the FRG, which has a nominal Christian majority but is, in fact, a secularized society.

#### **Our struggle and its practical implications for social justice**

The various experiences of the Tri-country Programme have helped us to identify the phenomena of a common reality, with varying degrees of exploitation of the vast majority by a small minority. It was clearly indicated that the driving force underlying these effects in maximisation of profits has resulted in a majority of the people being denied their basic needs and the opportunity to participate in economic and political decision-making. This creates the dehumanization of the masses, thus negating God's Plan for all people to live a full life. These experiences and analyses motivate us to struggle together in our respective countries to establish a socialist society.

We have learned that there are some people in our countries who are involved in different stages of the struggle which gives a clear indication of awareness among us as to the conflicts existing in our societies. This itself provides a basis for solidarity in relating to one another, thereby strengthening our common stance. We realize the fact that our struggles for transforming structures will not negate the struggles and conflicts which we are going through in our day to day lives in overcoming the values which are propagated by the capitalist society.

#### **Steps ahead :**

1. To share the tri-country experience with people, including our immediate contact groups and the church, in such a way that we express our option for the poor and thus initiate opportunities for a liberating education. For the German group, this will mean, for example, to take up the discussion on the rights of liberation movements, including the option for armed struggle according to the needs of the situation.

2. To broaden and strengthen the existing action groups and movements on a regional basis, with a national perspective.

3. To align ourselves with the progressive political forces which are operating in our respective countries, working for the genuine aspirations of the exploited masses.

4. To support existing national and international networks, for example, by spreading counter information on the role of TNCs in West Germany and in 3rd world countries, and on the growing investment in arms and its subsequent effect on our societies.

5. Finally, to actively participate each in his or her place on the ongoing struggles of people against calculated suppression and brutal violence by those who oppress and rule over people.

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#### **Theological Basis . . . —(Continued from page 7)**

Salvation in all religions is associated with the overcoming of an enemy, the evil one. In the Christian faith salvation is restoration of wholeness to all. Peace, salvation, wholeness are all related to one another. The 'enemy' is that which distorts the wholeness of human existence, individual personal existence as well as corporate existence. In so far as there is some enemy or evil to be overcome for the attainment of salvation in all religions, co-operation among religions should be possible in the discernment of the common enemy of man in the world today, particularly in Asia. In this process we are confronted by certain glaring realities. There is mass poverty. About 50% of Asian people live below poverty line and about 500 million people are in absolute poverty struggling even to keep alive. There is widespread ignorance and illiteracy. This is not the will of God but what has been brought about by man's inhumanity against fellow man, by the phenomena of economic and political exploitation. The exploitation by national elites in collusion with multinationals and transnations result in the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the aggravation of the misery of the poor. Along with this we also note the escalation of the arms race, the militarisation of the Indian ocean, the development of authoritarian regimes with the support of imperialist powers and the consequent erosion of democratic freedoms for the Asian peoples. It is in confrontation with such realities that we have to consider the meaning of salvation and not merely in personal psychological terms. Salvation is not escaping from these realities, but overcoming them and the realisation of wholeness and a sense of belonging to the whole for all, every person and every group.

Co-operation with people of other faiths is, therefore, not a matter of option, but a compelling obligation in order that the resources of all the religions for man's salvation are made available for the mobilising of the Asian people for their struggle against the dehumanising forces of oppression and for their liberation for peace with justice. This is integral to the fulfilment of the ministry of reconciliation which we have from Jesus Christ, a ministry which is described by the apostle as a ministry of peace, accomplished through the Cross, a ministry of breaking down the dividing wall of hostility and creating one new humanity (Eph. 2:14, 15).



# The Eucharist in One Frontier Situation

When I came to teach at Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, five years ago, I spent my first Sunday afternoon in Jail! Hardly what I expected to be doing, and not because of any instant clash with the authorities. But I was asked to go by another staff member, Bill Harris, who had been visiting the prison every Sunday for several years, along with students from the seminary. Although I had had experience of Jail Ministry in England, I agreed to go with some reluctance. India itself seemed overwhelming at the time, let alone being inside an Indian prison, and seeing whatever condition and scenes of desperation I might meet there.

I need not have worried. I was overwhelmed, then, and have been ever since, by the kind and understanding welcome of almost all the prisoners I met. And as one hears of and experiences through their words, some of the desperate, poverty-stricken and seemingly hopeless backgrounds from which many of them come, the feeling is overwhelmingly, 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.' Would I have had the resilience of spirit that so many of them have, if I had been born in their circumstances? It is in this atmosphere that I have been privileged to become part of the worshipping community there in the prison. As a group, we are doing much social and educational work with the prisoners and their families, and with released prisoners, and pastoral work too. But the centre of our ministry is this Sunday Worship, which is the visible symbol of why we are doing all that we do as representatives of Jesus Christ, as his caring hands and willing feet, we try to point beyond ourselves, to give glory to God. 'Not ourselves, but Christ Jesus and ourselves as his servants, for Christ's sake.'

I wish now to raise a problem that has arisen in our worship in the prison. Our congregation of between 30 and 60 people, is a mixed group. A few are practising C.S.I. Christians, baptized and confirmed. Some others are baptized, but have lost all contact with the church long before coming to prison, nominal Christians. Others are Roman Catholics, practising or non-practising. The majority are Hindus. They fall into several groups—some have come only recently, from curiosity, to join in the singing etc., others are different. They have been coming for many years (our worship has been held for more than 10 years now, and a life sentence is normally about 14 years). They have found a meaning to their lives through the gospel of love, forgiveness, acceptance and liberation, that they have heard and understood. How these words take on depth of meaning in this context! They have, some of them, truly changed or repented. They accept Christ as their Lord. Some would like to take baptism. But this is very difficult in prison. Permission is hard to obtain. Nor do we generally encourage them to seek it. Only when they are released, and see the social implications of taking baptism in their family and village context, can they really count the cost, and decide whether or not to go ahead.

This collection of people gathers with a TTS staff member and five students for fellowship and

worship every Sunday. And I never cease to wonder at the sense of worship that we experience together. I understand with a new sharpness, the meaning of the gospel as 'good news', as they hang on every word of the preacher in a way I have rarely seen happening outside, in our churches. The songs are picked up and sung with a real sense of bhakti, and no fear of what is new or strange. Confession and forgiveness, prayers of intercession and thanksgiving, are pointed and real to them in their situation. We ask for their requests for prayer, and include these too. Sometimes the prisoners themselves lead the worship. Moreover, even beyond our Sunday meeting, worship goes on. Every evening, in one of the blocks, a group holds a prayer and Bible study meeting. To this meeting are brought new members who are invited to our Sunday worship. And here, recently, they have asked us for our needs. In the Seminary and outside, for inclusion in their prayer with all their needs, they asked spontaneously to pray for ours!

In this context, in what way are we to celebrate the eucharist? This is, increasingly, my and our students' dilemma. To whom are we to give the bread and the wine? For here we have different groups of Christians, Protestant and Roman Catholic, confirmed and unconfirmed, practising and non-practising. Then, amongst the Hindus, some who have hardly heard the name of Christ, others who have come for years, remain fully Hindu, but enjoy being part of our worship; and then those who have accepted Christ, fully and deeply, and only the circumstances in which they are placed prevent them taking baptism and confirmation.

Our present practice is an unsatisfactory compromise. At the eucharist, and *only* at the eucharist, do we divide our congregation on community lines. We ask the Christians to be at the front, making no distinction between type of Christian or depth of faith. All Christians who wish, are asked to kneel at the front. To them all, we give the consecrated bread and wine. Then to the rest, we give an unconsecrated wafer, and say something like, 'The blessing of Christ be upon you.' This is a sort of prasadam, to make all feel part of the worship, and that they have received the blessing of God. It is to help those from the Hindu context. It is also to get over our discomfort at breaking up the unity and fellowship of our group.

But it seems unsatisfactory, both practically and theologically. It still leaves us with a division. And the division is not one of faith, but of whether baptism has been given years before, which may have little relation to the present situation. Some of the Hindus appear to have more faith than many of the Christians. Nor is it a division of knowledge even about the eucharist; those who have been coming to our regular worship for years have knowledge both of the gospel and of the meaning of the eucharist. But some of the nominal Christians have neither.

Some might say that the consecrated bread and wine should be given only to confirmed Christians, perhaps only those from Protestant churches. But to make



further divisions between Christians, I find undesirable and meaningless in this situation. Increasingly, in India, I find such distinctions of little meaning outside the prison, at least in the eucharist context, in face of how much we have in common. Bishop's Azariah reflected about 50 years ago, when looking at the countless people in his diocese who knew not even the name of Christ. What have the divisions in the church that we see displayed in the buildings of different denominations as we walk down the High street of an English town, got to do with these people he saw in front of him in India?

Is there any historical or theological justification for giving a sort of *prasadam* like this? Bread was given in pieces to be taken away, in the early Church, for the sick and those who could not attend. Justin in the second century tells us 'The deacons gave to everyone that was present to partake of the bread over which thanks had been offered, and of wine mixed with water, and then carried them also to those not present'. But these would have been baptised Christians, those who were sick, or could not be present for some other reason. And there was no distinction here between consecrated and unconsecrated bread—it was all the same sacramental elements. Such a distinction is however, found in the French and Canadian Roman Catholic traditions in more recent times. In High Mass, the eucharistic bread and wine are given; but afterwards another bread, known as '*pain benit*'<sup>1</sup> is distributed to the people, as a sign of charity and spiritual unity. They are clearly distinguished, and the people receiving would normally be baptised.

In the Easter tradition too, there is a distinction between two types of bread. One is taken from a loaf, consecrated, and given as eucharist, to those taking communion. The rest of the loaf is known as '*antidoron*', or '*eulogia*'. This is given to all, those taking communion and those not. It is not consecrated, and is probably a remnant of the agape meal, which used to be held along with the eucharist. Those receiving may have originally included the catechumens, those training for baptism, but who have not yet received baptism. But today it would normally be given only to baptised people who would be the only people to present themselves.

These precedents are interesting, and help to legitimise our present practice, to some extent. We do not find such precedents, though, in our protestant traditions. The reason may be that making such distinction between breads implies a theology of the eucharist of a mechanical type. The bread which I, lift up, is consecrated, but the bread at the other end of the table is not. Is this valid? It also implies a particular concentration on the words of consecration. Another viewpoint would be that this part of the service should not be isolated; that it is the whole celebration of the eucharist that is important, the offering and thanksgiving, the memory and the bringing into present reality, the eschatological anticipation of the coming of Christ, that are important, as a whole. In which case, is it possible to distinguish between two types of bread, that one is '*the Body of Christ*', and the other is not?

It seems we are doing this, in order to avoid doing the alternative, which is to give only one type of bread

and wine, to all who wish to partake in faith. This is the alternative that is now being suggested. To bring division in the fellowship at this moment is a denial of the meaning of the eucharist as the sacrament of unity. The basis of partaking should be that of faith, not what happened in childhood, or into what family one was born. This is a peculiar and extreme situation, where baptism is rarely possible. All those who accept Christ as Lord and understand the meaning of the eucharist should be able to partake fully, whether Christians or Hindus by name, whether the taking of communion has been preceded by baptism or not.

But how to decide who comes into this category amongst the Hindus? It would be possible to leave it to personal decision; to explain the meaning of the eucharist in each service, and ask those who wish to partake. But the problem would then be that there would be those coming only for the first or second time to the worship, new comers to the prison who have hardly heard the name of Christ. Perhaps this is no problem. The bread, in the feeding of the 5000, was given to all, not just those who had heard Jesus many times, and it is an anticipation of the Eucharist, very much so in John's gospel. But not so with the Last Supper, which was reserved for the 12, who had been with Jesus from the beginning.

Alternatively, we could, admit to communion, perhaps, by a simple declaration of faith on their part, those who have been known to us for some time, to whom we have given special teaching, and who are prepared to accept Christ as Lord in a mature and considered way. They would not be baptised or become Christians community wise—that decision is for later—but they would become full members of our worshipping community in the jail. Some such people are amongst those who lead the nightly worship in the block anyway. There would then still be a division in the community at communion time, but on the basis of faith, not birth or baptism.

The problems about these suggestions are that it is against the traditions of the church to admit to communion those who are not baptised. Justin again says, no one may receive the Eucharist except those who believe in the truth of our doctrines and who have been baptised for the remission of sins, and who live according to the commandments of Christ. It might also create problems outside—what happens when a man is released, is he to be allowed to take communion, still without baptism? Also, can one part of the church, however special the circumstances, be isolated from the disciplines of the church as a whole? And some might argue, even some of our Christian prisoners, why be baptised a Christian, if you can take communion regardless?

To these serious points, one can only say that this is a very special situation. Moreover, the eucharist can be a means of grace, that can help to confirm and strengthen the faith which has begun to grow in these Hindus. It can also help to confirm the change that has come in their lives—that here at the Lord's table, we are all accepted together as sinners for whom Christ died. They may be criminals, and even murderers, we are sinners in other ways, but we are all accepted and forgiven, and are part of the Body of Christ, and privileged to receive His Body and His Blood. That, as to the penitent thief, Our Lord says, 'Today thou shalt be with me in paradise'. One prisoner, a Hindu

<sup>1</sup> See article under this heading in Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1957.



who had murdered a relative in a fit of anger, some years before, was being counselled by one of our students. He had fully repented. But however hard our student tried to reassure him, he could not believe that he was accepted, accepted and forgiven by God. His consciousness of his sin was so strong. At the eucharist one day, he cried aloud before us all in his anguish. He asked afterwards, 'Can I really be forgiven?' To this, we can speak words of forgiveness. But to have been able to kneel beside him at the Lord's table, and to share the Body and Blood of the Lord with him, what a powerful sign this would have been to him of his final acceptance by God, who had died for him in Christ. It would be like the arms of the father, embracing the prodigal son. Moltmann in his book, the *Open Church*, seems to be writing for our situation, when he writes of the eucharist, 'His invitation, furthermore, is without limits and without conditions. The invitation to the eucharistic meal is the inviting request of the dying Christ, who was handing himself over for us. It is the crucified Christ himself who invites the poor and the guilty to the table of God's kingdom. That is why his welcoming hands open as wide above the eucharistic meal as did his outstretched hands upon the cross. The invitation to eucharistic fellowship in his name, is open to the world, excluding no one but including everyone. However, it is still a qualified openness. It is qualified by the bitter sufferings and death of the Son of Man'.<sup>2</sup> I am reminded here of what one of the prisoners said to me—he has been in prison for more than a decade, and suffers, too from an incurable and painful disease—'Only somebody who has suffered like I have, can understand fully what the sufferings of Christ mean for us'.

Moreover, the eucharist can be, I believe, a powerful instrument of evangelism. I have never seen such devotion, such rapt attention, as I have seen on the hardened and sweating faces of some of our prisoners, as I read the eucharist service. They know they are not worthy, they have gone through so much in their lives of poverty, lives so often without hope, yet here their lives are being touched with hope. In this situation the eucharist can reveal to them more of the gospel, than many torrents of words. Are we to deny them this for 5, 10, 12 years, because of a church rule, for a different and general situation?

I will end with one particular prisoner, which is right, for we are dealing with particular people. He was a poor woodcutter, a liquor offender, whose wife had died shortly before he came to prison. He was totally in despair, his 4 children abandoned. We were asked by the prison authorities to help with his children, which we did and are still doing. At first he had no interest in coming to our worship, but later he began to come, largely for fellowship at first. Gradually and convincingly he came to have faith in Christ. He joined in our prayers and our songs, but not in our eucharist. He knew the distinction between the two breads; he asked for the consecrated bread and wine. We said, no, wait, and explained how our church rules did not permit. He was released, and we agreed to give him baptism after a period of preparation. Students visited his village, to teach him, and he began to bring his friends along too. Then he was suddenly taken ill and died. I baptized him in the hospital, and literally his last words, before losing consciousness, were the answer to my question 'Do you have faith in Christ?'

'Yes, I accept him with all my heart'. A man of great faith, whose witness even now lives on. Only last month we dedicated a small prayer shed in his village for the small group of Christians which has come into being there, through his example. Were we right to deny him his desire to be part of the eucharist fellowship? Would Our Lord have turned him away and said wait?

Moltmann, in the same essay, says, 'The more I see behind the mystery of the Lord's Supper the mystery of his self-surrender, the more clearly I hear in the invitation to the meal, the invitation of the crucified one. It is the appeal of the Christ in whom I live, who suffered and died for me and the world. Therefore I see no reason why any church should hold back the open hands of Christ which are outstretched toward all. I find no right to refuse eucharistic fellowship to anyone who hears and responds to the invitation of the Crucified One'. And he goes on 'What does need to be justified is every exclusion, every refusal and every holding-back. But how can these be justified when we are dealing with the Lord's Supper and not with something arranged by a church? The Lord himself invites the poor to this meal in order to enrich them through his poverty; it is not just the invitation of a confessional body to its members. The invitation to grant freedom and justification to the abandoned comes from the Friend of sinners and not from a particular group to its participants'.<sup>3</sup> Was the exclusion of this poor woodcutter justified?

So, I leave the matter here. The members of our Jail ministry team and I would be interested in the reactions of readers to our dilemma. The Orthodox have a doctrine of 'Economy', where certain rules can be set aside, when faced with a particular human situation. They would apply this to the eucharist where, for example a Roman Catholic was living where there was an Orthodox Church, but no R.C. Church within reach. He could be admitted to communion because of the particular human situation. Can we extend this further, and apply this in the prison? Hindus of the sort I have described? This article is about our prison situation. Perhaps there are other situations too, in multi-faith India, where people are struggling alongside the poor and oppressed, perhaps in other frontier situations, where this also applies. What should we do in these circumstances?

Andrew Wingate, Lecturer, Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, Madurai. Conversion Ministry to Prisoners.

### Book Review—(Continued from page 13)

put an end to exploitation and injustice and establish a new human order in which all men will live as children of God enjoying their god-given human dignity and realise their best-self.

The value of the volume is enhanced by the readings and songs given at the end which are equally relevant and contextual and kindle radical thoughts in the mind of the reader. Written in a language and style that appeal to people who have concern for the suffering humanity the book should go a long way in putting life into our worship programmes and more iron into the spiritual life of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Open Church*, SCM, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, Moltmann, p. 87.



# Theological Basis for Co-operation with People of other faiths for Peace with Justice

A Declaration adopted by the Consultation held at Colombo on October 23-27, 1980, under the auspices of Asian Christian Peace Conference

The world situation today and particularly the Asian reality challenges the Asian CPC to seek active co-operation with people of other faiths in their calling to work for peace with justice. The Asian region has more than half the world's population. Only less than 4% of this population are Christians. Most of the others are believers in other great religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

The inter-religious relationships among the various religions as well as the relationship between Christianity and other religions have had a long history of confrontation, conflicts and polemics based on authoritarian and aggressive claims of uniqueness and superiority. During the last few decades as a result of growing understanding of one another and the deepening of self-understanding of each faith the attitude of confrontation has been increasingly abandoned and there has developed the dialogue approach. Both the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II have encouraged Christians to adopt the dialogue approach in relation to other faiths. This has brought about a new spirit of mutual respect, humility in making claims of religious truth, desire for harmony, willingness to learn from one another and attempts to remove misunderstandings and misconceptions. Now the dialogue approach is leading to a period of partnership or co-operation in the fulfilment of common tasks. It is this context which makes it particularly appropriate for the Asian CPC to explore the theological foundations for Christians to co-operate with people of other faiths in the struggle for peace with justice.

The Consultation listened to and discussed presentations on the different religious responses to the world struggle for peace with justice. The Buddhist response was interpreted by Ven. Wellawatte Gnanabhiwansa. Prof. K. Kailasapathy dealt with the Hindu response and Mr. N. M. M. I. Hussain the response of Islam. Bishop Leo Nanayakkara and Mr. Silan Kadirgamar presented the Christian response. The discussion highlighted both the role of legitimising the *status quo* of oppression by dominant classes and the instances of inspiration for struggle against oppressive and unjust structures associated with the history of all the religions. It was noted that in all the religions in their classical period as well as in later history there developed movements for inspiring people to struggle against injustice and oppression. It is therefore possible to discover in all the great religious resources for helping people in their contemporary struggle for peace with justice. We also can profitably pursue the highlighting of resources in every religion for promoting mutual co-operation and support for this struggle.

The primary objective of the Consultation was to discover the theological basis for Christians to co-operate with people of other faiths in this struggle.

The Consultation affirmed that the concern for co-operation with others is rooted in the Christian faith which we have inherited from the Bible and from the declarations of the ecumenical councils both ancient and modern. The faith in God testified to both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament calls for a spirit of universal inclusiveness, overcoming all forms of separatism and exclusiveness. 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nation' (Is. 56:7). 'In every nation, anyone who is God fearing and does what is right is acceptable to him' (Acts 10:35). 'If you know that he is righteous, you must recognise that every one who does right is his child' (1 John 2:29).

The purely individualist and other-wordly and the exclusivist and narrowly triumphalist interpretations of the Gospel are misleading large sections of Asian Christians and this has to be overcome by more systematic Bible study as well as knowledge of other faiths.

It is equally important to affirm that the faith we have inherited from the Apostles and through the ecumenical councils, compels us to be actively involved in solidarity with all peoples in the struggle for peace with justice.

Our faith is in God who has created us in his image and called us to be co-workers with him. As creator of the world he is constantly bringing order (Cosmos) out of disorder (chaos). Being co-workers with him implies discernment of his purposes as a God of love and righteousness and to be instruments of his righteousness. He has revealed his image in a decisive manner in Jesus Christ, and our confession of Jesus as Lord means that our worship of God is rooted in the recognition of God in Man. Love of God and love of Man integrally and inseparably belong together. 'In so far as you have done it to the least of these my brethren you did it to me' (Matt 25:40). In the Biblical faith God's involvement is seen primarily in his solidarity with the poor and the oppressed and in the liberation of oppressed peoples. Peace and righteousness are inseparable (Ps. 85).

The central theme of all religions, namely, salvation provides a further basis for co-operation in the struggle for peace with justice.

(Continued on page 3)



# News from the Dioceses

## A BRIEF REPORT OF THE THREE-DAY SEMINAR ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ORGANISED BY THE SYNOD BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### 1. All Hail The Power of Jesus

With the singing of 'All Hail the power of Jesus Name', an eventful three-day Seminar on Vocational Education first of its kind, organised by the Synod for the headmasters of Higher Secondary Schools of the CSI of the Southern States began on 21st November in the CSI Higher Secondary School, Coimbatore.

#### 01. The Genesis of the RSC :

Explaining to the participants and the distinguished speakers of the Seminar, the Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraiswami said, how after six years of relentless struggle, the Study and Research Centre has come into being.

Drawing profusely from his experience as a physics teacher, Headmaster of perhaps the biggest school in the composites Madras Diocese, and as a Bishop of a sprawling Diocese, the Moderator enlivened his talk with examples and thus enhanced the content of his lectures.

#### 02. The Kongunadu welcome:

The Rev. William Moses, Convener, Board of Higher education Synod, extending a warm welcome assured that the Seminar was a big triumph in the field of Higher education in the CSI. It was a distinguished gathering, participants coming from all the four states of the Southern Region. He took the trouble of going to the station to welcome the participants and guide them to the venue of the Seminar. A typical kongunadu welcome !

### 2. 01. Co-workers in the Vineyard of God :

Describing school teachers as co-workers in the Vineyard of God Bishop Thangamuthu in his devotion pointed out :

- (a) We cannot teach but provide the child with an opportunity to learn.
- (b) We have to go beyond the limits of our duty, ready to walk the second mile cheerfully.
- (c) Church and community centred Education is our great need.
- (d) New vision and strength should be the distinguishing mark of Christian Education.
- (e) Education should glorify God, the creator.

### 3. 00. The objectives, practical Applications of SRC :

The Moderator's sessions dealt with :

- (a) The objectives of Study and Research in centre.
- (b) Practical Application of the Research Programme.
- (c) How to harness the outcome of the research.
- (d) To rededicate the workers in our schools.

### 01. Kherygma and Diakonia :

The Moderator outlining the objectives of the Research programme of the Synod said :

- (a) Education is the transformation of the natural man and his sublimation.
- (b) Christian schools should have Christian characteristic of Love of Christ and service to fellowmen.
- (c) Education should dispel darkness and throw light everywhere.

### 02. The Three Cs of the RSC :

Emphasising the practical application of the Research Programme in education the Moderator maintained :

- (a) The child is most important in Christian Education set up.
- (b) Christ is the foundation for the Educational endeavour of the Church schools.
- (c) Service to the community should be the special aim of school.

### 03. Building-up of Our Institutions :

Highlighting the need for the spirit of service in all the workers in our schools and institutions, the Moderator said :

- (a) Christ is the fact of our Existence.
- (b) Our Schools should be filled with new life, vigorating and full of zest.
- (c) All forms of corruptions and evils, pomp and power should be faced boldly and driven out.
- (d) Forces of oppression should be effectively removed.

### 4. 00. The Session on Vocational Courses, Career Development, Vocational Research.

Asking an interesting question why thinking ability not developed by our Education system, Dr. Koilpillai observed :

- (a) There should be no bull-doing of pupils in a single career. Schools must open opportunities to develop various gifts that children have.
- (b) A method be devised to measure the effects of changes in educational systems.
- (c) Ideas on vocational counselling should be woven into fabric of action.
- (d) Ideas and thoughts expressed on vocational Education have to be flexible but a dynamic syllabus has to be drawn up for church schools.

### 01. Dr. E. S. Vedanayagam :

Presenting an interesting and earned paper on vocational development. Dr. Miss E. Vedanayagam, H



of Department, Department of Education, Madras University said :

- (a) The concern of the vocational psychologists is to study the shift that has taken place, from the static concept of vocational choice to the more dynamic concept of vocational development.
- (b) Vocational development begins in childhood.
- (c) In the vocational area there are stages in which an individual is expected to know what kind of work he proposes to do for a living when he is going to support his family and when he should settle down if he is drifting from one job to another.
- (d) Vocational development is systematic and proceeds in a particular identifiable direction; enabling others to assess an individual's development quantitatively and qualitatively.
- (e) Through proper guidance students can be led to fuller and richer career development.

#### 02. Dr. Rajammal Devadoss :

An eminent and well-known educationist Dr. Rajammal Devadoss brought a fresh approach to the old problem of educating the young.

There are slow-learners, the mentally retarded and the deformed (e.g.) mango shaped and coconut shape headed human beings. The reason for all these are :

- (a) Malnutrition and tuberculosis.
- (b) Teaching methods are not suited to the mental development of the children.
- (c) Schools are not research oriented.
- (d) More and more emphasis should be on the child than on anything else.
- (e) Discipline and order are to be instilled when pupils are very young.

#### 03. Mr. Rajagopal :

An ardent exponent of vocational education Mr. Rajagopal, a research scholar and Headmaster said :

- (a) Pupils must be educated not to undersell themselves soon after their vocational course is over and when they go seeking employment.
- (b) Vocational stream should not be mistaken for cheap-labour or child-labour.
- (c) Care should be taken that no vocational course comes to a dead end.
- (d) The syllabus for vocational course should be relevant to the life as it obtains outside the school walls.

#### 04. The Headmaster in Wonderland :

The hospitable Headmaster of the CSI Sec. School, Coimbatore and his bee-like-active staff looked after the food section of the seminar. They threw the guests from the four states into wonderland of food and very pleasant decorations. The schools in Coimbatore played the host for one meal. We thank the Moderator, Conveners of the Synod Board of Higher Education and the HM and all his staff for their generous hospitality.

#### 06. Music and Melody :

We listened to a very delightful and melodious songs which the youth of the YMCA sang. The film and slide show on vocations and other subjects were interesting.

#### Dedication :

Invoking the blessings of God, the Moderator in the dedication service offered the prayer.

'Lord come: come into my life: take possession of me:

Let me be thine now and for always. I give myself to thee'.

A. E. KAMALANATHAN,

*A Participant from the Vellore Diocese and  
Headmaster, Voorhees Higher Secondary School,  
Vellore, N. A. Di.*

#### CSI WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

*The Dialogue on the Role of women and their new concerns.  
From 20th October to 25th October 1980 at Vishranthi  
Nilayam, Bangalore.*

Sixty-six delegates from 17 dioceses participated in the dialogue. It was inaugurated by the Rt. Rev. Azariah, Bishop of Rayalaseema Diocese and Moderator's Commissary of Central Karnataka Diocese, and Mrs. Clara Clarke, the President of the CSI Women's Fellowship delivered the inaugural address. Eminent Speakers spoke on status of women in the Home, Church and Society. Distinguished and experienced speakers delivered addresses on parent-child relationship, Socio-Economic Analysis of India, Women in Society as agents of development, Co-ordination with other women's organisations and rural women as 'bare footed' doctors. The Theological reflection was given by Dr. Christopher Dorai Singh from United Theological College, Bangalore. At the close of every address there was time for questions and discussion.

On 21st October at 5.30 p.m. the Bishop Cotton's Girls presented a Children's Panel. It was entertaining as well as thought provoking when the children burst out 'We don't want raging by parents' 'We don't want to be under the thumb of the parents'.

On the 23rd morning there was a panel of speakers to explain projects that could be taken up by Women's Fellowship branches. Need for Rehabilitation of destitute women, Co-operative Societies, Community health, income generating projects were well presented. In the afternoon two buses took the delegates to visit the various projects in action in Bangalore city.

A new awareness was aroused on hearing statements that the roles of women and men are complementary with different functions, ambition for more income lays foundation for wrong priorities and neglect of parental care results in broken homes.

Church and home ignore frustration among youth. Their eyes were opened to the realities when the statistical data of our large percentage of population living below the poverty line was given.

The Theological reflection given by Dr. Christopher Dorai Singh placed the women in their appropriate position. The following are some of his expressions :—



Yahweh could be man or woman. 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let *them* have dominion.....' Gen. 1:26 God is creative, self-expressing and outgoing. In Hebrew the word obey means hear. We are entitled to be free, creative, self-expressing individuals. Depending on others is sin. Salvation has come through women. Mary is a virgin because she was not depending on Joseph or anyone. Salvation is to the whole self: body, mind and soul. It must be to the whole self under all circumstances. Women must be messianic. Messianic means disturbing presence. He challenged the women by saying that spiritual revolution is expected from them.

The steering committee with the delegates drew up a plan for follow-up work. It has planned to conduct the same kind of dialogues at diocesan, area, pastorate and village levels in the next two years. It was also decided to educate women and prompt them to act through literature, talks, leaflets, role-plays, music, posters, cartoon competitions, dialogue between Women's Fellowship branches and youth groups and parents fellowships.

The dialogue was very profitable to every delegate. May God help every member to move in action for the benefit of the unfortunate sisters among whom she lives.

SUGUNA DEVASUNDARAM

*General Secretary,  
CSI. WF.*

## MADURAI-RAMNAD DIOCESE

### Ministerial Couples' Retreat at Courtallum

To hear the streams of talks by three learned people: Dr. A. K. Tharian, Rev. Rupsingh Carr and Mr. B. Jayaraj, around a common theme 'Being with God, Being with the people and Being with the family'—the Ministerial couples flocked from August 26th to 28th 1980 at the Church of Transfiguration (CSI) Courtallum, the whole programme being aided by USPG, London, our solicitous hosts abroad whom we thank with all our heart.

The blissful panorama of Courtallum lifts your heart! The main falls shimmering against the rocky crevice catches your eye! The serenity of the bluish ranges has inspired awe and wonder for centuries. In one sense, the ministerial couples were very much blessed to be here in company with each other, as couples. This was epochal! Visually, this was a spiritual family—gathering with a sense of belonging to each other, gracefully clustering around their spiritual father, the Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Pothirajulu, our Bishop.

At 2 p.m. on August 26th, Tuesday, the Bishop introduced us to the basic concept, 'The Work and Witness of a Ministerial Couple' as depicted by our Master and Teacher in Matt. 25:19 and elevated our heart and soul with exhortations thus: 'You are a talented creative force, progressive and 100% productive provided you pool all your talents, invest and work, work and work'.

Our children were no problem. They set their own miniature heaven by playing angel through singing, praying, playing, dramatizing and displaying their esteems for the joy of the group.

The three speakers, spoke in turn:

Dr. A. K. Tharian, addressing on 'health and healing' emphasised that emptiness, fear, self-centredness, resentment and guilty consciousness cause disharmony, illness, with the result that, man within himself 'disoriented', and alienated with himself, with fellow men and with God. 'What is health? he asked. 'A right relationship with himself, with fellowmen with God'. Illness is separation from what he has to be. If illness is so, health is the restoration. Physical illness causes spiritual illness too. 50% of illness is due to the mental pain of people. As pastors' families we have a lot to do in the field of healing. What are the causes for mental illness? Again the same points: 1. Emptiness, 2. Fear, 3. Self-centredness, 4. Resentment, 5. Guilty consciousness. This means loss of

The doctor highlighted some positive needs for healing. They are: 1. Sense of security, 2. To love and be loved, 3. To be contributive of talents, helpfulness and creativity, 4. The sense of recognition, 5. Fulfillment of the right goal. According to medical science, health is not the prevention of dying but giving the possibility for living. How did Jesus heal the sick? Sometimes he used sand and mud to heal. His words alleviated suffering. His touch healed. At times he spoke giving his spiritual-counselling. His purpose was to make them live purposefully.

'The Church' he defined, is a community of healing people 'who work for healing'. Our visions were widened when we visualized the origin and growth of the Christian Fellowship Hospital at Ottenchatram. Ambilikkai in stages, through the projected colour pictures on screen.

The Rev. Rupsingh Carr, expounding the Gospel portion Luke 4:31-37, took us to some new avenues of deep-pondering. Emphasizing on the first article of the Christian creed, 'God, the Saviour is the very Creator, sustainer and preserver of mankind who is amazing, the Great Designer of the Universe, the Galaxies, Solar systems and our own planet, the earth. Our Saviour in his Nazareth Manifesto, declared that he is the anointed one—'the Great Deliverer to redeem mankind from illness, evil spirits, nature's havoc and death itself. The pastor is likewise commissioned by the Master to proclaim the Good News of the New Testament. The risen Christ is the Sovereign God who is mighty enough to solve every human crisis arising out of selfishness, social evils and other satanic forces hovering arounds. The pastor, the servant of God, has an absolute necessity to depend on God and to yield himself in accordance with John 15:1 f. This meant, 'Being with God'.

He displayed visual aids (from his Organization Secretariat in Madras Diocese) and laid the emphasis on 'Being with His people through the Pastor's planned leadership to train Lay-Leaders to organise strategic groups of Christian families to form prayer-cells, cottage prayer meetings, Bible study groups, Dynamic Prayer Movements, witnessing in social life and Evangelistic work.

He set the example of SALT in having succeeded in training the Laity to take up roles as Bible study—Secretaries, Witness and Evangelism—Secretary and prayer Group Secretary and so on....

By 'Being with the Family', he shared his views with us, at length. It seems somewhat impossible for a pastor to be with his family for the reason the clergy in India, have a rural setting of parishes to feed innumerable



able village churches. At every back and call, the pastor moves wearisomely sometimes, moving the family to anxiety. Yet, the pastor has an obligation to set a model home for endearment and care. Rev. Rupsingh Carr's jovial, blooming smiles blended with his identity of partnership in our Ministry, found expression during the course of his talk. Quite unforgettable!

Prof. B. Jeyaraj spoke about 'Church Growth'. He energetically challenged the pastors with the need for their dynamic role in the following 3 phases of work in Church Growth.

He voiced that the pastor, before ending his term of office at a particular zone, accomplishes Church-planting 1. by extension whereby new churches are planted within his pastorate, 2. by division whereby new pastorates are formed from within, 3. and by conversion whereby people from other faiths are introduced to Christ and accepted into the fellowship of the church through Baptism so that the converts form a new church. These, he termed otherwise as biological growth, transfer growth and conversion-growth.

There was one more classical item. Our Bishop arranged a sharing hour for the ministerial couples who were asked to sit two by two, in a circle. This being done, the wife was asked to tell about her husband as to how best he does his job. 'Very good compliments'—each one received from his spouse with also a claim that she was always his good critic at his sermons and pastoral work.

We had timely fellowship—meals, family worship at cottages (Township-homes) and we never got exasperated until the last minute.

We welcome this sort of retreat many more times in the years ahead.

REV. A. CHANDRA SAMUEL,  
*Secretary, Christian Literature Unit.*

## KARNATAKA SOUTH DIOCESE

### News from Karnataka Southern Diocese November '80

The Rev. Walter Gengnagel and his wife visited the Diocese between 4th to 10th November, 1980. This was Rev. Gengnagel's last visit to India, in his capacity as Secretary, Asia Desk of the Evangelical Missions-work, Germany. He has worked in this capacity for over a decade, and through his mediation the K.S.D. has been the recipient of EMS magnanimity over the years.

The K.S.D. has been involved in extensive development work among the Koraga Community (B.C.) at a village called Sacharipete. The National Social Service Wing of Vijaya College, Mulki, organised a work-camp from 23-10-1980 to 1-11-1980 at this Community Centre, offering Shram Dan towards a noble cause.

An Ordination Service was conducted on 9-11-1980, at Hardwicke Church, Mysore by Bishop S.R. Furtado, Moderator's Commissary. The service was well attended by visitors from all over the Diocese.

20 Deacons were ordained as Presbyters, and 4 candidates as Deacons.

St. Bartholomew's Church, Mysore, celebrates its 150th year anniversary this year. In honour of this celebration, Prince Shrikantadatta Wadiyar laid the Foundation Stone of the New Parish Hall, on 28-11-1980. Bishop S. R. Furtado presided.

On the occasion of the 200th Anniversary of Sunday Schools, the Balmatta Sunday School Choir and Orchestra of 40, gave a concert of Music and Song, at Shanthi Church, Balmatta, Mangalore on 26-10-1980, and at Jubilee Church, Udupi on 16-11-1980, under the direction of Mr. O. S. Neethi. The concert was the first of its kind held in South Kanara, by the Sunday School children, and proved that much hidden talent was yet to be tapped from the younger generation. Members of the Roman Catholic Church also participated in the concert.

EVA D. BELL.

## NORTH KERALA DIOCESE

### Harvest Festival in North Kerala Diocese

Harvest festival in North Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India is a real festival in which in most parishes and congregations all their members as well as many members of neighbouring CSI and other churches participate. Sometimes a number of non-Christians also take an active part.

The festival is planned several weeks before and normally it is held on a Sunday afternoon in October, November or December. A public worship service under the chairmanship of the Bishop or other dignitary is the most important part of the festival. The youth and children of the congregation play a vital role in this. Ten or more different pieces of Christian musical items with and without instruments and reading of different Bible portions related to harvest festival are their contributions. The Bishop or a special speaker gives the message for the day. It is always a call for personal dedication of the members together with their offerings in cash and Kind.

The festival has already been held this year in many congregations with more enthusiasm than ever before. In a few of the churches, the total offerings for the day has exceeded even the partnership amount for the year. One small congregation, for example, with a partnership payment to the diocese of Rs. 4,000 has raised more than Rs. 6000. This should open the eyes of all church leaders and others to the possibility of raising more funds for paying the pastors and lay workers a reasonable wage above the poverty line, helping the disabled and others in the community and spreading the good news of the love of God among those who do not know Him.

DR. V. T. GEORGE.

## RAYALASEEMA DIOCESE

### Short History of Hope High School, Madanapalle

The Hope High School, Madanapalle was established by Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, a medical missionary, in the year 1881, as a lower secondary school, at Mission compound, Madanapalle. The management felt the need for a good and full fledged high school for the poor and downtrodden people of the area. So the school was upgraded into A.A.M. high school, in the year 1891. The present building was constructed in the year 1910 and the school was shifted to the heart of the town. Rev. B. Rottschaefer was responsible for the present building.

The name of the Hope High School was given by Rev. J. D. Muyskens as the infant high school was supported with a grant from Hope College, Michigan.



The Anchor, the symbol of the school, and the motto 'HOPE HIGH IN GOD' are the ancestral derivation from the feeder College.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the management was forced to downgrade the high school to a higher secondary school in the year 1925. But the school maintained great standards in education, and a conspicuous place in sports and games in Madras Presidency.

Through the sincere efforts of Sri M. Barnabas and his colleagues, the school was upgraded as a high school in the year 1947 and the high school came under the management of Church of South India. Since then the school is growing step by step. Many dedicated correspondents and headmasters worked hard to keep up the status of the school. As the school is preparing to celebrate its Centenary in February, 1981, we wish our

old staff and students to remember their Alma Mater and pray for the institution.

## THE WOMEN'S ORDER OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

is sorry to report the deaths of Sister Beatrice Daniel Nagercoil on 9-10-'80 and Sister Grace Aaron in Vellore on 7-11-'80. Both held the posts of General Secretary of the Women's Fellowship, Warden of Vishram Nilayam and Elder Sister of the Women's Order. They were two outstanding leaders in the Church, for whom we give grateful thanks to God.

CELIA, Sr. C  
Secretary, Order for Women

TELEGRAMS: TNSCBANK

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C03	36	124	05	310	10	620	25	1,240	50
C03M	37	130	55	326	45	652	90	1,305	85
C04	48	141	35	353	40	706	85	1,413	70
C05	60	154	15	385	35	770	75	1,541	50
C05M	61	167	25	418	15	836	35	1,672	75
C06	72	183	50	458	80	917	65	1,835	35
C07	84	203	05	507	70	1,015	40	2,030	85
C07H	90	213	60	534	05	1,068	10	2,136	25
C08	96	224	70	561	75	1,123	55	2,247	15
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C10	120	275	10	687	80	1,375	65	2,751	30

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## BOOK REVIEW

**REBELS AT PRAYER: A Collection of Worship Forms**, Edited by Aruna Gnanadason; Published by the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, pp. 195.

The absence of youth is conspicuous at Sunday Worship Services in our Churches. This is one of the most disturbing features of the life and work of the churches in all the countries of the world not excluding India. The reason for this lack of interest on the part of our young men and women is that very often the Worship Services are traditional and unimaginative, hopelessly lacking in social relevance and cultural contextuality. The Ecumenical Christian Centre which is noted for many experiments and new initiatives in the life and mission of the Church has been trying to provide a remedy for this by experimenting with new forms of Worship. The book under review is the second fruit of their endeavours, the first being the volume entitled 'Worship in Youth's Idiom'.

'Rebels at Prayer' contains several worship forms based on day-to-day problems of the people in the language and idiom that appeal to the youth and tries to satisfy their aspirations and idealism. All these worship forms are products of the commendable assumption that 'Worship cannot take place in a vacuum isolated from the realities of the day'. Accordingly the themes of these experimental worship forms deal with the problems, anxieties and fears of

the school drop-outs, victims of landlordism and police torture and the plight of working women, bonded labour, slum dwellers, Harijans and the handicapped. There are also thought-provoking worship forms relating to the problems of environmental pollution, natural calamities, people's participation in decision-making and multi-national corporations. All these indicate the wide spectrum of human problems posed by the contemporary unjust and exploiting society which denies basic human rights to all those helpless millions who happen to be members of marginalised groups.

These prayers have the merit of making worship realistic and relevant to our human situation. They also direct our attention to the emptiness of formal prayers said day in and day out in our churches and their failure to lead the worshippers to reflect upon the hard realities of our social situation and take decisions to stand with the poor and fight against corruption, exploitation and injustice which rob social orders of their humanity. As against the formally structured worship services which are mechanically chanted, the worship forms included in this volume represent a new break-through in the life of worship of our Churches in so far as they make the participants of the worship to understand the exploiting human and social relationships, rouse their righteous indignation and produce a strong will and decision in their minds to

(Continued on page 6)

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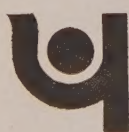
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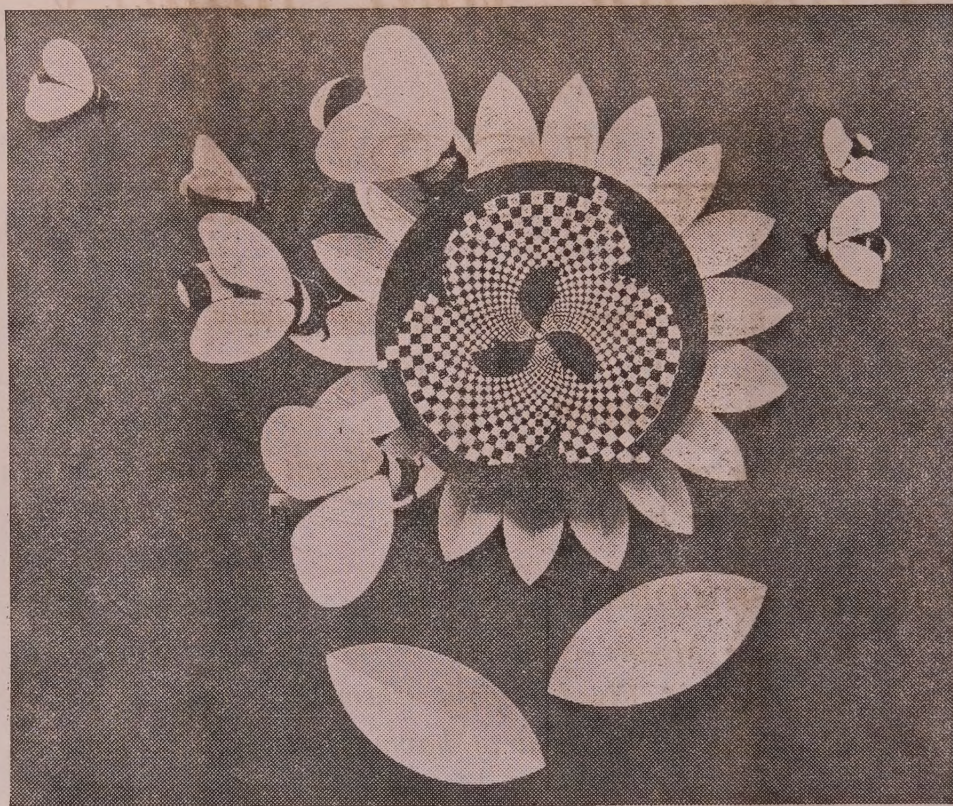
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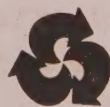
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